

The Messenger

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In Search of a New Campus

As our parents and society members are aware, but few others, WCA attempted to purchase property in April. Although the property was sold to the Washington Waldorf School, we are left with an even greater certainty that "the Lord has lifted His countenance upon us." We are continuing our search for a future site, confident of the worthiness of the WCA mission and our readiness to meet more fully the metropolitan need for academically strong Christian education.

Most of you know that our facility need has become acute. We are carrying forward a program of high-caliber academics through 12th grade in a facility built for an elementary school. In mid-March, the Facility Search Committee learned that Chestnut Lodge, a psychiatric hospital complex in Rockville, would be sold soon, due to bankruptcy. The property offered numerous buildings highly adaptable for use as a campus. It is a beautiful site and conveniently located for most of our families.

The Board became aware of the site on March 6 and asked the Site Committee to investigate it. Led by Don

Drew, the Committee quickly realized the full value of the opportunity and prepared plans and estimates for adapting the site to our needs. In a surprise move, an aggressive schedule was set for the sale of Chestnut Lodge due to the needs of the resident patients. Bids were due April 12, with the final decision scheduled for April 23. Immediately, our Board of Directors was catapulted into high gear. On March 24, the Board visited the property, received the committees' recommendations, and voted to seek Society approval to purchase this property.

We immediately contacted a foundation that has shown interest in WCA in the past to gauge their level of interest. The chairman called back the same day with a highly unusual idea: perhaps the foundation could front the entire purchase price with a loan from the bank that holds their assets. We agreed to try to demonstrate the commitment of our community as evidence for the trustees of the foundation that WCA is ready for such a step. We set ourselves two goals: (1) to raise the entire 5% down-payment for a bid of up to \$7.5 million...by April 12, and (2) to obtain pledges for a significant portion of the costs over a three-year period. That amount was later agreed to be \$2 million in pledges for the years 2001, 2002, and

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Shakespeare Festival

On April 6, the Honors Literature Class performed at the Folgers Theater in the annual Shakespearean Festival. Reprising and modifying the play-within-a-play scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, they performed in front of an audience filled with students from other schools. The performance was critiqued by professionals well versed in the dramatic arts and Shakespeare's texts.

When the class' scene was finished, the packed theater erupted into a spontaneous and raucous standing ovation. While it was a day filled with excellent performances and lots of applause, they were the only group to get a standing ovation from every person in the room. During their performance, the biggest problem was the audience laughing so hard at the comic roles that many of their funniest lines couldn't be heard.

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Preserving, Auditing, Planning

It has been said that the main duties of a school board are preservation of the heritage, auditing of the present, and planning for the future. Preserving the heritage includes our remembering God's provision and celebrating His faithfulness. We audit the present by striving to keep the school financially strong and by evaluating our programs. In order to plan for the future, we must constantly renew commitments to our established mission and vision, develop a strategic plan for achieving that mission, and set aside funds for future needs to meet those commitments.

Throughout this past school year, we have concentrated our activities in many of these areas. The most noteworthy was our recent attempt to formulate a bid for purchase of the Chestnut Lodge property (see above). While we did not place a bid on the property, we were both

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Discover E

Discover E is a nationwide program that attempts to show young people, while still in elementary school or high school, what engineering is, so that they might consider careers in engineering or science. Kids who are taking a career in engineering seriously will want to take a lot of math and science courses, and many will experiment at home with various projects.

The Discover E program was presented at Washington Christian Academy on 28 March 2001 by three engineers from Northrop Grumman, the sponsoring company. Tia Carson, Don Jones, and Mark Jekel (all electrical engineers) showed video clips of a Northrop Grumman aircraft, a video showing the engineering that goes into making bicycles, and a video about how correct design can allow very light structures to carry very heavy weights. Tia and Don shared how they got involved with engineering, while Mark gave an overview of the different types of engineering. Students were put into groups to create and build structures and then expose them to the earthquake simulator to see which ones would survive. The students were presented with a Discover E pamphlet and a cool calculator. It has been reported that some of the students have already dissected these calculators and rendered them useless, but even this curiosity and discovery is toward the goal.

On May 9th, a ceremony is planned at Northrop Grumman, where representatives of Washington Christian Academy and other area schools are to be presented with a \$1,000 check to assist the school.

—Mark Jekel
Parent, Engineer



An 8'x5' painting on canvas by Stephen and Isaac O'Dell (4th and 7th grade) is one of the many beautiful artworks exhibited throughout the school halls during our Fine Arts Week.

IN SEARCH OF A NEW CAMPUS

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2003. The immediate goal was \$375,000. And there wasn't even time for a mailing! Last year, WCA raised \$151,000 in gifts from individuals—the best we have ever done in a 12-month period. The apparent impossibility of raising more than twice that amount in about a week required us to rely on our sovereign God, more consciously than usual.

In just a few days, we wrote a case statement and worked out plans for funding the purchase, renovation, and operation of the facility as an upper school. Our architect, David Kitchens, produced a professional classroom building and site development plan, and incorporated both into an attractive brochure. The Board pledged almost \$100,000 to come in by April 12. At several meetings, Board members and Ron Whipple explained the exciting opportunity to parents and friends. Word spread, along with enthusiasm, and pledges and checks began pouring in.

A spirit of joy and optimism pervaded this effort. And yet at no point did the leadership of the school presume to know God's will. Ron said it best: "We're seeking God's will and asking Him to indicate very clearly where He wants us. When you're walking by faith and God closes a door in front of you, it kind of stops you short. But if you're at a full sprint in faith and God closes the door—well, it's more of a crash ending."

By April 6, we had made our \$375,000 goal, with \$350,000 pledged in new gifts by April 12 and \$25,000 available in our stock fund. We were just beginning to seek pledges for the longer term goal; some friends had pledged gifts in 2001, 2002, and 2003 totaling another \$124,000. We were confidently moving forward.

The foundation trustees were most pleased with the response of our community. But the unusual nature of the plan (foundations don't usually lend) led them to reconsider the matter. On April 10, they notified us that they could not lend more than \$2 million. This, then, was the clear guidance we had asked for, and we halted the process of preparing our bid. Deuteronomy 29:29 says, "The secret things belong to God," and the future site of WCA is one of them. It also says: "But the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children," and the goodness of our God is one of our most cherished revealed truths.

Many of our donors (70% so far) do not want their Chestnut Lodge gifts returned, so we have opened an Expansion Fund (contributions welcome!) to enable us to be better prepared for the future.

Just as we are continuing the site search, we are continuing the dialogue with the foundation and opening dialogues with other individuals and foundations to seek major gifts. The mission of serving the nation's capital with a first-rate Christian school is one that can inspire many people. Call me with your suggestions of potential donors.

—Robin U. Gropp
Director of Advancement

WCA Founder Mourned

Neeltje Jacoba (Cobie) Jansen has gone to her eternal rest, and is mourned by many in the WCA community. Cobie was an energetic volunteer in the early years of the school, and her sons Dennis and Brian graduated from WCS in 1965 and 1970, respectively.

In the summer of 2000, Cobie served on the Founders' Committee, preparing for the 40th anniversary of the school. We were honored to have her among us, as beautiful as ever, at the anniversary banquet in October.

We are grateful for the generous memorial contributions we have received in honor of Cobie Jansen, totaling over \$1,300 so far.

—Robin U. Gropp

We Need YOU!

Don't forget WCA in your tax-deductible charitable giving this spring. The Academy Fund Drive is still in need of \$35,000 by July 31 to cover the costs of facility upgrades and networking expenses for the current year. Your gifts make Christian education both possible and excellent.



Preparation for College at WCA

The logo for WCA is the triangle: Home, School, and Church working together to educate the next generation of Christians. How does WCA stand alongside and encourage parents and students when it is time for our next generation to graduate from WCA, move out of the home into the college dormitory, and find a new church at college? As parents and students anticipate this transition, excitement mingles with dread: Will the student be ready academically? Will the student get into the college of choice? What is the "college of choice," a Christian college? a public university? an Ivy League school? a military academy? twenty-two thousand students or two thousand students? Will the student be able to manage a checkbook and stay on a budget? Will college be affordable? What is a FAFSA? From SAT preparation to college tours to packaging college applications to "Money Management for College Students," WCA stands alongside parents and students as they make the transition from WCA to college.

WCA is confident of the academic preparation of our students for college. Our SAT scores for the last ten years average 1259, 400 points above the national average, 200 points above the Montgomery County average. Our students have consistently received recognition in the National Merit Program and designation as AP Scholars. But how do we help parents and students with the mechanics of getting into college?

Preparing for college begins in earnest at the start of the sophomore year when our students participate in SAT preparation prior to taking the PSAT in October; all sophomores and juniors are required to take the test. These

SAT Prep classes are mandatory! It's a wake-up call: "Yikes, if I want to go to Duke, I really have to get these scores up!" Sophomores receive PSAT scores, realize where they rank nationally among other college-bound high school students, and identify academic strengths or weaknesses.

Sophomores, juniors, and their parents are urged to attend "College: The Application Process." This seminar takes place on a Saturday morning in mid-March, presenting students and their parents with a thorough yet clear outline of all the major areas relating to college applications: SAT 1 and 2, financial aid, and the timetable of steps to be taken. Many helpful handouts are distributed! The goal of this seminar is to turn the gigantic and confusing college application process into a clear and manageable undertaking that parents and students can navigate. Parents are especially relieved to learn that college applications leave WCA as a complete package (signed & sealed) containing all the required transcripts, recommendations, essays, etc. All student applications and essays are read, critiqued, and approved by two faculty members. Many simple mistakes are caught and corrected, and this personal attention to college application is one of many factors that enable WCA students to regularly gain admittance to prestigious colleges and universities.

Parents and students are urged to visit colleges to figure out the "college of choice." Experiencing a campus by talking to current students, seeing the dormitories, grounds, and classrooms, and hearing from admissions officers is the soundest means for students and parents to identify that "best-fit" college. Parents are urged to arrange

Spanish 3 Trip to Miami

Nothing prepared me for the amazing time and experience of the Miami trip with my Spanish 3 class. Never having done anything like this before, I felt a bit nervous about how it would all play out. Would there be enough opportunities for the students to practice Spanish? Would the good weather hold out? Were they going to be bored at the Latin American art gallery? Were the students going to go into culture shock and forget three years of Spanish and not be able to answer when asked their names? Oh, yeah, and how was I supposed to keep people on the fairly tight time schedule I had created, being genetically predisposed to CUBAN TIME? And the list went on and on. But God had this whole trip planned, and He orchestrated one of the most memorable trips I have ever experienced.

The students on the field trip: Myaa Yeaky, Leah Harford, Christina Jackson, Lamara Toro, Michael Hollis, Simon Barreto, Michael Morrison, and Joe Mason were an incredible witness to all those they encountered. At a pig roast at my parents' home, many of my unsaved family and friends commented on how different these kids were. One couple, parents to two small children, asked me how these kids seemed so "good." Well, I told them that it wasn't just the private school they attend, or even the good parenting they get, but rather their personal faith in Christ and the Biblical standards with which they have been raised.

The Key Biscayne Presbyterian Church really came through and provided for us over and beyond the call of



The Spanish 3 students with Mrs. Barreto, Mrs. Baker, and Mrs. Baker's parents.

duty. Not only did the church and its members provided us with housing and breakfast every day, they added little touches such as a banner over the entrance door welcoming us. In addition, Mrs. Barreto, who chaperoned with me, was an invaluable support. She had a wonderful way of affirming the students and encouraging them to savor every aspect of this trip.

When I got back to school, I couldn't stop exclaiming how gracious the Lord had been and how He had touched the hearts of these kids and those around them. What a blessing to see the fruit of not only academic preparation, but social and spiritual teachings culminate in the fulfillment of a terrific field trip.

—Lily Baker
Spanish Teacher

PRESERVING, AUDITING, PLANNING —continued from page 1

overwhelmed and greatly encouraged by the support and enthusiasm generated within the WCA community in such a short time. The Board's Facility Search Committee is continuing to investigate other such opportunities as they arise. Please pray that God will continue to lead us in these efforts. An exciting by-product of this endeavor is that leaders from the Reformed Theological Seminary are continuing to work with the WCA Board and administration on exploring ways in which our two organizations might form future partnerships.

The Strategic Planning Committee has also made significant progress in its efforts to create a new long-range plan for WCA. A first draft of this plan is nearly complete. Soon we will present that plan to various parts of the WCA community for your review and input.

We are also very excited about a plan that was recently formulated by the administration and approved by the board for implementing a formal resource program at

WCA. The mission of WCA states that we are to educate and develop the talents of covenant children, and we recognize that the Lord has created those children with many different types of intellects and granted them in varying degrees. We are therefore responsible to do all that is within our power to address the needs of every student. The administration's plan is to gradually phase in a program over the course of several years, beginning in the fall of 2001. This plan attempts to address the needs of a broad range of students, including those who are gifted and talented, those who are of average ability but need reinforcement in certain areas, as well as those who have learning disabilities or attention disorders.

If you're interested in learning more about these and other plans, please come to the Spring Meeting of the WCA Society, which is scheduled for Monday, May 14. The annual election of directors will also be conducted at this meeting. At this point, three individuals have agreed to be nominated for election: Mark Steimer, Andrew Warren, and Sterling Mehring.

—Howard Bushouse
Board President

OPERA QUIZ KIDS

This year, WCA upper school students participated in *Opera Quiz Kids* – a program organized by the education departments of the Washington Opera, the Metropolitan Opera, and four other opera companies in North America. In each region, schools were invited to send three students to spend a Saturday testing their knowledge of three operas. Schools were accepted into the competition on a first come-first served basis, with a limit of only 12 schools per opera company.

The participating opera companies had previously determined what three operas would be studied this year, then prepared booklets giving the characters and plot as well as biographical information on the composer and librettist of each opera. In addition to the study guide, we were given videotapes of full productions of the 3 operas: Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Verdi's *Aida*, and Bizet's *Carmen*.

The opportunity was presented to the students in Mrs. Dullnig's elective drama class, and most of them expressed interest. We then spent several weeks during class listening to summaries of the plots and recordings of key musical passages. Eventually, three students, Amy Austin, Nathan Hoeksema, and Kristen Schwab volunteered to represent our school at the all-day competition.

At the event, students' familiarity with the three operas was tested first with a written, multiple-choice test. Next, during a listening test, a selection was played and the students were asked to identify what was happening or what character was singing, again individually on an answer sheet. In the afternoon, during the only part of the Quiz in which sponsoring teachers could observe, students were given thought-provoking questions on any aspect of the operas they had studied. The team had to collaborate on one of the responses, and each student was also given a question to answer individually.

They were treated as special guests throughout the day, with each participant and sponsoring teacher receiving several prizes. Three students were chosen to square off at the next round, which was held at the Kennedy Center. All Round I participants were invited to attend. The 3 students were showered with even more attention and prizes, including \$500 scholarships for each of the runners-up from this region. The winner, along with a parent and the sponsoring teacher, was to be flown to Toronto for several days during which the field of six would be narrowed to the three who would appear on the intermission quiz during a Saturday matinee broadcast of the Metropolitan opera. More scholarships were to be awarded at each level of participation.

Someone from the education department of the

Washington Opera mentioned that the Round III competition may be held in London in the near future. We are looking for 3 or 4 upper school students to form our 2001 Quiz Kids team.

Participation in this program was just one of many ways WCA high school students have enjoyed opera over the years. From the earliest days of SSCA, English teacher Terese Judkins organized an annual outing to a dress rehearsal of an opera. Last year, when the Washington Opera offered a matinee instead of an evening dress rehearsal, our entire high school attended a stunning performance of Puccini's *Tosca*.

–Nancy Keegan
Librarian

Playing High School Basketball



My experiences as a WCA basketball player have not been typical of the normal High School athletic experience. We do not have a gym, we don't have a weight room, and we don't have amazing height. However, there is one thing that I think defines our team. Heart! Freshman year I was a little disappointed that we would not have access to some of the facilities that our opponents had. By my senior year, there were times that I was glad that we did not. I think it brought greater focus to our team, and was always a motivation, too.

In the last two years specifically, I think that our teams have shown that it is not the "size of the dog in the fight, but the size of the fight in the dog" that counts. If there is one lesson that I have learned from my experience as a WCA athlete, it has been the importance of time management and faith in the Almighty. The lack of gym space really made us value the gym time that we had, and thankful for the existence of our athletic program.

The growth of our team over the last four years has been amazing as Simon Barreto can also attest to. Both of us have seen the basketball team evolve from being underdogs to expected champions. Looking back to the days of getting beat by thirty and forty points, I do not think we ever would have thought one day we will be on the other end! The last four years have truly been an experience that has given the team character and a testimony of what God can do, if we only believe in Him.

–Michael Hollis
Senior

At the upcoming Sport Banquet, we will recognize the many good athletes among us as we praise God for His provisions for WCA even in this area.

COLLEGE PREPARATION

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visits and include other WCA students. Mrs. McGovern and Mrs. Rosetta successfully arranged visits this year to Messiah, Grove City, and Elon Colleges with a group of students. WCA provides a college tour specifically for 8th and 9th grade students. Last year's trip to the University of Virginia was an eye-opener. "After visiting UVA, I really understood the importance of taking as many AP and Honors courses during high school as possible. All universities, not just UVA, want to see that you really care about being educated and are willing to push yourself to your highest potential." (Leah Harford) Sophomores and juniors are offered extensive tours that include four or more colleges over several days. Last year, "we visited colleges that ranged from a small Christian college like Covenant, to major state NCAA colleges like Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Each college shared with us the standards for getting in. It was helpful to know that they do not only look at grades, but also at leadership and extracurricular activities." (Kelly Rosetta)

What does all this mean? If your son or daughter has intentions of going to college, there is no finer preparation available than the academic attention and college-application support of the Upper School teachers of WCA. Average students become excellent students, and excellent students become tomorrow's leaders. Consider the successful endeavors of our alumni in teaching, writing, medicine, the law, and the sciences, and see the fulfillment of our mission: our graduates occupy their places worthily in home, church, and state!

—Jan Adams
Upper School Principal

SHAKESPEARE

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While the festival does not operate as a competition, the judges do hand out awards for exceptional work. The entire cast received a very impressive ensemble award for their understanding and insightful interpretation of Shakespeare. This award, one of only three, was given in recognition of their hard work and judicious decisions interpreting the text. The cast included Hanna Adams, Katiana Adrien, Susanna Brockman, Lainey Holiday, Michael Hollis, Ben Kitchens, Ched Nunez, and Emily O'Dell.

Emily O'Dell and Ben Kitchens both received individual awards for outstanding acting. Michael Hollis received a special "throw the dog a bone" (the judges' words; Michael portrayed a dog in the play) award for taking a small part and contributing in a big way.

This group presented a slightly different version of this scene at our own Shakespearean festival this fall and at the anniversary banquet. Two additional class members, Kelly Rosetta and Avi DeSilva, also performed integral roles in these productions.

—Brian VanderHaak
English Teacher

From here and there



The Kindergarteners excitedly watched and chronicled how **chicks hatch**. What a great experience! They also have been learning how people with different occupations can serve men and glorify God by **parents visiting** and talking about their jobs.

Second grades, in addition to their many recent interesting fieldtrips, will have their own **Spring Program** for their families on May 18th, with songs, skits, dance, etc. It will be videotaped for a precious keepsake. Some busy classes!

Fourth grades will make their traditional **visit to Camden Yards** to watch the Baltimore Orioles play. They were visited by **Art Nelson, a geologist**, to complement their studies on rocks and minerals.

Fifth grade is going to visit the **Sandy Spring Museum**, which has an excellent exhibit on the Underground Railroad.

The WCA students welcomed their grandparents with a festive **Grandparents Day program**. The WCA Children's Choir and the Upper School Jazz Ensemble also contributed to the special occasion.

The 5th grade team of I. Adams, N. Cavin, D. Cole, E. Hoeksema, J. Hoobler, K. Turner, and C. VanderHaak, coached by Betty VanderHaak, won second place in the regional competition of **Destination Imagine**.

We immensely enjoyed **Fine Arts Week**, with talents shows of various performances and many wonderful artworks exhibited in the hallways.

Joe McMillan and another Special Agent will teach WCA Upper School students about **cyberspace safety**, and share how they track and arrest cyber criminals. They will demonstrate on-line how predators target young people, and how to avoid them.

Our students performed outstandingly in the recent **Model United Nations** and **Model Arab League** events, lead by Avi DeSilva and Lainey Holiday. Watch for their reports in the next *Messenger*.

Our **Promise Tree** "promises" provided \$23,568, a record high, toward tuition assistance. We are grateful for our able and generous "auctioneer," Mr. Don Dean, a long-time friend and supporter of WCA, and also an emeritus Board president. We praise God for His love toward us through such people as Don Dean. Thank you, Don.

TO PONDER

Right is right, even if nobody is doing it. Wrong is wrong, even if everybody is doing it.

—Scott Wilder

Coram Deo